

**Guidance for Foster or Birth Parent Visitation  
COVID-19 (Coronavirus)  
March 20, 2020**

The following guidance is based on the most current Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) recommendations for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. This guidance is not intended to address every potential scenario that may arise as this event evolves.

**Guidance for DCS employees making face-to face or video-conferencing visits with foster parents**

- When making home visits, staff will utilize Center for Disease Control and Tennessee Department of Health guidelines.
- In all instances, child visits with children in foster homes will be conducted via videoconferencing, unless safety concerns, no video capability or other circumstances that warrant face to face.
- When not videoconferencing, a face to face visit will be required. For scheduled face to face visits, staff will call the foster family in advance of the visit to complete a health questionnaire to determine any risk due to visitation.
- The health screening questions are:
  1. Have you or anyone in your home had contact within the last fourteen days with any person under screening/testing for COVID-19, or with anyone with known or suspected COVID-19?
  2. Do you or anyone in your home have any symptoms of a respiratory infection, for example, cough, sore throat, fever over 100.4, or shortness of breath?

If the answer to either question is "Yes,

1. Instruct the individual to remain at home and contact their health care provider immediately.
2. In all circumstances above, instruct the client or family member to notify the receiving healthcare provider and transporter in advance of potential concern for COVID-19.
3. Notify supervision for any further instruction regarding the foster child/children in the home

**Guidance for DCS employees making face-to face or video-conferencing visits with birth parents**

- Parent/Child or Sibling Visitation will be conducted via videoconferencing to include therapeutic visitation. Contact legal if a court order dictates the parameters of visitation.
- When videoconferencing is not appropriate, a face to face visit may be necessary either in the office or in a non-group community setting. For scheduled face to face visits with birth parents, staff will call the birth parent in advance of the visit to complete a health questionnaire to determine any risk due to visitation (see screening questions above and applicable action steps if

either question is answered "Yes").

### **Guidance for minimizing risk of exposure for DCS custodial children/youth**

- DCS staff will urge all foster parents to follow CDC guidelines regarding limiting social interactions that could potentially expose custodial children/youth to COVID-19.
- If a foster parent believes that he/she has potentially been exposed to COVID-19 through interaction with an individual who has exhibited symptoms or tested positive for the virus, follow CDC recommendations for self-quarantine, consult your medical provider, and immediately notify the child's case manager or follow the on call-protocol.

### **Guidance regarding home passes**

- For the period between the date of this document and March 31, 2020, DCS will not be initiating any home passes. Foster parents should ensure that children/youth have access to opportunities to communicate by phone/facetime with those whom visitation was normally scheduled. DCS will have responsibility for advising families of the temporary restriction.

### **Guidance regarding court appearances**

- From the date of this document through the end of March 31, 2020, if the child/youth has a pending court date, foster parents should check with the case manager to ensure that the court date has not been re-scheduled.

### **General guidance for foster parents and foster children**

- Best practices include:
  - Wash hands often with soap and water (or alcohol-based hand rub) for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing. Do not touch eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Stay home when sick.
  - Cover coughs and sneezes with arm or a tissue.
  - Clean and disinfect objects (i.e. cell phone, computer, etc.) and high touch surfaces regularly.
- Those considered high risk are (1) over 60 years of age, (2) have one of the following conditions – diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease. Please practice universal precautions to limit your risk.
- If you have any symptoms of a respiratory infection (cough, sore throat, fever above 100.4 or shortness of breath), contact your healthcare provider.
- If you have had contact with any persons under investigation for COVID-19 within the past 14 days or know anyone with known COVID-19, please contact your healthcare provider

